

REMARKS

I. The 35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,500,858 issued to McKeown ("McKEOWN") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,091,709 issued to Harrison et al. ("HARRISON"). For purposes of expediting prosecution, Applicant has canceled claim 19 without prejudice. Applicant reserves the right to pursue claim 19 in a continuation application.

B. Claims 20-21

Claims 20-21 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claims 20-21 have been amended to independent form and should now be in condition for allowance.¹

C. Claims 1-18

Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing claims 1-18.

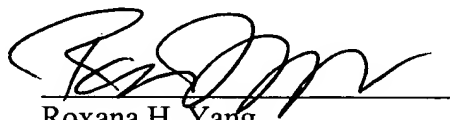
¹ Claims 20-21 in dependent form already incorporated all the limitations of claim 19. Therefore, the changes made to rewrite claims 20-21 from dependent form to independent form are merely changes in form, not substance, and should not cause prosecution history estoppel.

II. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone interview would help advance the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roxana H. Yang', is written over a horizontal line.

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